

GI SPECIAL 2#B88



Alex Ryabov, (USMC ret'd) Iraq Veterans Against The War October 2, 2004 at anti-war march commemorating the 1,091 U.S. dead, Iraqi dead and the dead of other nations.

Join with Iraq War vets to end the occupation and bring our troops home now!

www.ivaw.net (Matthew Bradley) (matt at machination * org)

Marines Openly Question How And Why War Is Being Waged: “What Are They Going To Do? Send Us To Iraq?”

October 10, 2004 By Steve Fainaru, Washington Post Staff Writer

"The reality right now is that the most dangerous opinion in the world is the opinion of a U.S. serviceman," said Lance Cpl. Devin Kelly, 20, of Fairbanks, Alaska.

Lance Cpl. Alexander Jones, 20, of Ball Ground, Ga., agreed: "We're basically proving out that the government is wrong," he said. "We're catching them in a lie."

Asked if he was concerned that the Marines would be punished for speaking out, Autin responded: "We don't give a crap. What are they going to do, send us to Iraq?"

ISKANDARIYAH, Iraq -- Scrawled on the helmet of Lance Cpl. Carlos Perez are the letters FDNY. After the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on New York, the Pentagon and western Pennsylvania, Perez quit school, left his job as a firefighter in Long Island, N.Y., and joined the U.S. Marine Corps.

"To be honest, I just wanted to take revenge," said Perez, 20.

Now, two months into a seven-month combat tour in Iraq, Perez said he sees little connection between the events of Sept. 11 and the war he is fighting. Instead, he said, he is increasingly disillusioned by a conflict whose origins remain unclear and frustrated by the timidity of U.S. forces against a mostly faceless enemy.

"Sometimes I see no reason why we're here," Perez said. "First of all, you cannot engage as many times as we want to. Second of all, we're looking for an enemy that's not there. The only way to do it is go house to house until we get out of here."

Perez is hardly alone.

In a dozen interviews, Marines from a platoon known as the "81s" expressed in blunt terms their frustrations with the way the war is being conducted and, in some cases, doubts about why it is being waged. The platoon, named for the size in millimeters of its mortar rounds, is part of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment based in Iskandariyah, 30 miles southwest of Baghdad.

The Marines offered their opinions openly to a reporter traveling with the 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines during operations last week in Babil province, then expanded upon them during interviews over three days in their barracks at Camp Iskandariyah, their forward operating base.

The Marines' opinions have been shaped by their participation in hundreds of hours of operations over the past two months.

Their assessments differ sharply from those of the interim Iraqi government and the Bush administration, which have said that Iraq is on a certain -- if bumpy -- course toward peaceful democracy.

"I feel we're going to be here for years and years and years," said Lance Cpl. Edward Elston, 22, of Hackettstown, N.J. "I don't think anything is going to get better; I think it's going to get a lot worse. It's going to be like a Palestinian-type deal. We're going to stop being a policing presence and then start being an occupying presence. . . . We're always going to be here. We're never going to leave."

Although not as highly publicized as attacks in such hot spots as Fallujah, Samarra and Baghdad's Sadr City, the violence in Babil province, south of the capital, is also intense. Since July 28, when the Marines took over operational responsibility for the region, 102 of the unit's 1,100 troops have been wounded, 85 in combat, according to battalion records. Four have been killed, two in combat.

Senior officers attribute the vast difference between the number of killed and wounded to the effectiveness of armor -- bullet-proof vests, helmets and reinforced armored vehicles, primarily Humvees -- in the face of persistent attacks. **As of last week, the Marines had come upon 61 roadside bombs, nearly one a day. Forty-nine had detonated. Camp Iskandariyah was hit by mortar shells or rockets on 12 occasions; 21 other times, insurgents tried to hit the base and missed.**

Realities on the Ground

Several members of the platoon said they were struck by the difference between the way the war was being portrayed in the United States and the reality of their daily lives.

"Every day you read the articles in the States where it's like, 'Oh, it's getting better and better,' " said Lance Cpl. Jonathan Snyder, 22, of Gettysburg, Pa. "But when you're here, you know it's worse every day."

Pfc. Kyle Maio, 19, of Bucks County, Pa., said he thought government officials were reticent to speak candidly because of the upcoming U.S. elections. "Stuff's going on here but they won't flat-out say it," he said. "They can't get into it."

Maio said that when he arrived in Iraq, "I didn't think I was going to live this long, in all honesty." He added, "it ain't that bad. It's just part of the job, I guess."

As a reporter began to ask Maio another question, the interview was interrupted by the scream of an incoming rocket and then a deafening explosion outside the platoon's barracks. Pandemonium ensued.

"Get down! Get down!" yelled the platoon's radio operator, Cpl. Brandon Autin, 21, of New Iberia, La., his orders laced with profanity. "Get in the bunker! Get in the bunker now!"

Members of the platoon raced out of their rooms to a 5-by-15-foot bunker, located outside at the end of the one-story building. The dirt-floor room was protected by a low ceiling and walls built out of four-foot-thick sandbags. Once in the bunker, several Marines lit cigarettes, filling the already-congested room with smoke.

"The reality right now is that the most dangerous opinion in the world is the opinion of a U.S. serviceman," said Lance Cpl. Devin Kelly, 20, of Fairbanks, Alaska.

Lance Cpl. Alexander Jones, 20, of Ball Ground, Ga., agreed: "We're basically proving out that the government is wrong," he said. "We're catching them in a lie."

Maj. Douglas Bell, the battalion's executive officer, said "one of the most difficult things about the insurgency is identifying the enemy."

Bell said it was frustrating for "every Marine in the battalion" to search for insurgents on a daily basis, only to be attacked repeatedly with bombs and mortars detonated or launched by an invisible enemy. "You want to get your hand around his frigging collar and kick his ass," Bell said. "But they slip away."

The Marines acknowledged that the elusiveness of the insurgents was frustrating. "You don't really know who you're fighting. You're more or less fighting objects," said Elston, the lance corporal from New Jersey. "You see something on the side of the road. It blows up."

But the Marines said their frustrations run deeper. **Several said the Iraqi security forces who are supposed to ultimately replace them were nowhere near ready and may never be.**

"They can't take care of themselves," said Lance Cpl. Matthew Combs, 19, of Cincinnati, who added that he didn't think the National Guardsmen "can do anything. They just do what we tell them to do."

The Marines also expressed frustration that they were unable to fight more aggressively because of restraints in the rules of engagement imposed by senior commanders.

The rules, which require Marines to positively identify their target as hostile before shooting, are cumbersome in the face of urban guerrilla warfare, several of them said.

"When we get called out, we'll sit there staging there for an hour," Maio said. "By the time we're ready to move, they're up and gone. A few weeks ago, the Iskandariyah police station was under attack. We staged for damn near an hour before we went out. It's stupid. You have to wait to get approval and all this other stuff."

Kelly, the lance corporal from Alaska, said he understood the need to protect civilians but that the restraints were jeopardizing American lives. **"It seems as if they place more value on obeying the letter of the law and sacrificing our lives than following the spirit of the law and getting the job done," he said of his commanders.**

Bell said the Marines' frustration was understandable but that it was extremely difficult to make a determination of hostile intent following a roadside bombing that might have been detonated by anything from a remote-controlled toy car to a cell phone. "That's a pretty difficult decision to make for a 19-year-old kid," he said.

Lance Cpl. Jeremy Kyrk, 21, of Chicago, said the insurgents took advantage of the limitations imposed on U.S. troops. "They don't give us any leeway, they don't give us any quarter," he said. "They catch people and cut their heads off. **They know our limits, but they have no limits. We can't compete with that.**"

Perez said the frustrations inherent in the war became apparent almost immediately after he arrived in Iraq in late July. A Colombian immigrant, he said he decided to join the Marine Corps after attending the funeral of a friend who had died in the Sept. 11 attacks. The friend, Thomas Hetzel, was a volunteer firefighter at the Franklin Square & Munson Fire Department on Long Island, where Perez also volunteered.

At the time, Perez was studying criminal justice at Nassau Community College. "While I was at the funeral I was looking at his little daughter cry," he said. "He had a pregnant wife and two kids. I just said, 'All right, this is what I want to do.' "

But Perez said he came to think that war in Iraq was unrelated to his anger. "How do I put this?" he said. "First of all, this is a whole different thing. We're supposed to be looking for al Qaeda. They're the ones who are supposedly responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks. This has no connection at all to Sept. 11 because this war started just by telling us about all the nuclear warheads over here."

Snyder, who was listening, added: "Pretty much I think they just diverted the war on terrorism. I agree with the Afghanistan war and all the Sept. 11 stuff, but it feels like they left the bigger war over there to come here. And now, while we're on the ground over here, it seems like we're not even close to catching frigging bin Laden."

Perez said he thought that in some ways he was still fighting terrorists "and I can see how they might attack the United States in the future. It's a link, but it's not really based in the same thing."

Perez added that he now believes the primary reason for the U.S. presence is to help the Iraqis. "But they don't seem like they want to be helped," he said. "I've only been here two months, but every time you go out, people give you bad looks and it just seems like everybody wants to shoot you."

Questioning Orders

The frustration of the Marines was evident one afternoon last week as members of the platoon traveled from Forward Operating Base Kalsu back to Camp Iskandariyah. An attack had reportedly taken place in the area, and members of the platoon were asked to leave their Humvees and walk up a road to look for suspicious activity.

Traffic quickly began to pile up: cars packed with families, trucks loaded with animals and vegetables. The line of vehicles would have taken hours to search.

An order was suddenly passed for the Marines to search all buses for insurgents or weapons. "This is what we call a dog-and-pony show," said Kelly, the heavyset, sharp-tongued lance corporal from Fairbanks. He said the operation was essentially a performance for American reporters who were traveling with the

Marines. "This is so you can write in your paper how great our response is," he said.

Combs and another Marine boarded a small bus packed mostly with women and children. He walked up the center aisle carrying his M-16 assault rifle, then got off, disgusted.

"We just scared the living [expletive] out of a bunch of people," he said. "That's all we did."

When the Marines returned to their truck, Autin and Kelly began to debate the merits of the American presence in Iraq.

"And, by the way, why are we here?" Autin said.

"I'll tell you why we're here," Kelly replied. "We're here to help these people."

Autin agreed and said he supported the mission.

He added later that it was difficult to wage the battle when American commanders were holding them back.

"We feel they care more about Iraqi civilians than they do American soldiers," he said.

Asked if he was concerned that the Marines would be punished for speaking out, Autin responded: "We don't give a crap. What are they going to do, send us to Iraq?"

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and in Iraq, and information about other social protest movements here in the USA. Send requests to address up top.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Baghdad Rocket Attack Kills 2 U.S. Troops

Oct 11 AP

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Two soldiers from Task Force Baghdad were killed and five wounded Monday in a rocket attack in southern Baghdad, the military said. The attack happened at 8 a.m. local time, the statement said.

Soldier Dead In Road Wreck

October 11, 2004 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 1011-04

Pfc. James E. Prevete, 22, of Whitestone, N.Y., died October 10 in Habbaniya, Iraq, when his military vehicle encountered whiteout conditions and the driver apparently lost control of the vehicle. Prevete was assigned to the Army's 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, Camp Greaves, Korea.

U.S. Casualties In Mosul Car Bomb Attack

October 11, 2004 The Australian & (Reuters)

A US military spokesman said earlier that there had been "a complex attack" on a convoy in Mosul and that there were unspecified casualties.

Witnesses say they said they saw body parts scattered in the street after the blast on Monday, which occurred in southern Mosul on the main highway leading into the city from the south. Helmets lay on the ground from US soldiers, an AFP correspondent said.

No casualty figures were immediately available, but the witnesses said civilians and soldiers had been hit.

A utility vehicle sped up beside the US convoy and exploded in Mosul's southern Yarmouk district, said Iraqi police officer Jarella Mohammed Said. "I saw a pick-up truck driven by a suicide bomber," he said.

The bomb gouged a huge crater two metres (six feet) deep in the road. U.S. soldiers opened fire after the attack, the witnesses said.

Wayne County Native Killed

Oct. 10, 2004 Associated Press, PLEASANT MOUNT, Pa.

An active-duty Army sergeant from northeast Pennsylvania died Friday in Iraq, a week after he was injured when his patrol vehicle was struck by an explosive device, the Defense Department said.

Andrew W. Brown, 22, of Pleasant Mount, Wayne County, had been in Iraq since June, his mother, Lourdes Brown, said Sunday night. Brown, who died in Baghdad, was assigned to the Army's 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry based in Fort Polk, La., according to a Defense Department news release.

"I had talked to him about a week ago," Lourdes Brown said. "He was fine."

Military officials have given the family some information about how he died, but they were still trying to gather more details, she said.

She declined to elaborate on her son's life, saying the news was "still very raw." "We're just waiting for him to come home so we can plan his funeral," Lourdes Brown said.

U.S. Copter Down Over Heet

11 October 2004 Aljazeera.Net,

Monday a US military helicopter was shot down over the Western Iraqi city of Heet, Aljazeera reported.

White House Plans Delay Of Major Assaults In Iraq: Worried About Election

October 11, 2004 By Mark Mazzetti, Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON -- The Bush administration will delay major assaults on rebel-held cities in Iraq until after U.S. elections next month, say administration officials, **mindful that large-scale military offensives could affect the U.S. presidential race.**

Administration and Pentagon officials say they will not try to retake cities such as Fallujah and Ramadi -- where insurgents' grip is strongest and U.S. military casualties could be the greatest -- until after Americans vote in what is likely to be a close election.

"When this election's over, you'll see us move very vigorously," said one senior administration official involved in strategic planning, speaking on condition of anonymity. **"Once you're past the election, it changes the political ramifications" of a large-scale offensive, the official said. "We're not on hold right now. We're just not as aggressive."**

"I don't see that we would have a reduction in U.S. and coalition forces between now and January," Rumsfeld told Marines who asked when they might be able to return home.

"We're having more impact with our airstrikes than we had expected," said a senior Defense Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "We see no need to rush headlong with hundreds of tanks into Fallujah right now." **[True. Resistance recruiting increases with every air strike.]**

Samarra: Occupation Comes Up Dry

October 10, 2004 Thanassis Cambanis, Boston Globe Staff

The attack on Samarra, long a thorn for the US military, was in part meant as a dress rehearsal for taking Fallujah, but has had mixed results. US and Iraqi troops patrol the streets in Samarra now, the military said, but they failed to capture any major insurgent leaders or any of the suspected large cells of foreign Arab fighters.

Mahdi Army To Start Disarming

October 11, 2004 AFP

BAGHDAD - Radical cleric Moqtada Sadr's militia is to start handing in weapons today under a deal with the Iraqi government.

A few militiamen from Sadr's Mehdi Army were seen lining up at one police station in the Baghdad Shiite slum of Sadr City on the first day of the test agreement that could clear the road for a lasting truce between the Iraqi government and the young preacher.

Police were paying cash for weapons at the Al-Jazeera police station in Sadr City. [So load up at the nearest ammo dump and make your fortune.]

After five days of the weapons buyback programme, Daoud said Iraqi forces would be free to conduct sweeps in Sadr City. *However, the Mehdi Army has insisted searches were not included in the deal.*

World Class Goatfuck:

Scouring Iraq For Enemies & Finding Farmers While Useless Strykers Take Mud Baths

Oct. 9 JAMES GLANZ, New York Times

In at least one case, the problem with the Iraqi back roads led to a disastrous eight-hour ordeal in which new armored vehicles called Strykers became mired in an irrigated field as they were chasing an insurgent who had just fired mortar shells at them. The attacker escaped.

AL YUSUFIYA, Iraq, Oct. 9 - **House-to-house raids in this dangerous swath of territory about 30 miles south of Baghdad are turning up few men of fighting age, leading American commanders to believe that insurgents are melting away ahead of troops who are trying to bring the area under Iraqi control. [Wow! Imagine that! The guerillas are acting like guerillas. Who could have guessed they would do such a thing?]**

At the same time, intelligence here has been sketchy, leading to nighttime raids on what appear to be no more than frightened farm families.

And the rural terrain - irrigation-soaked roads that are either too narrow for armored vehicles or too weak to support their weight - partly negate the Americans' vast technological advantage. [There's another total tactical surprise. Why, how could any commander possibly have seen that one coming?]

In at least one case, the problem with the Iraqi back roads led to a disastrous eight-hour ordeal in which new armored vehicles called Strykers became mired in an irrigated field as they were chasing an insurgent who had just fired mortar shells at them. The attacker escaped. Overnight Friday, they searched two towns just east of the Euphrates River and found that they had been deserted, virtual ghost towns.

Even when the raids have uncovered weapons, the men who must have put them there have not been found. **In one instance, several women said all their husbands had died.**

"One thing that's remarkable to note is how the enemy has changed," said Capt. Bart Hensler, who commands a Stryker unit that is taking part in the raids. "We're always trying to stay one step ahead of each other, *but unfortunately the enemy has the advantage.*" [Especially when they can run faster than those worthless pieces of shit you're pushing around to enrich some war-profiteer defense contractor. He's safely home reading his bank statements while you're driving these miserable excuses for war vehicles around a countryside where they're not merely useless, they an active impediment to movement.]

Lt. Col. Buck James, a battalion commander in the Stryker Brigade, said that even though melting into the population was a time-honored guerrilla tactic, it might be hurting

the insurgency here. **In Iraq's macho culture, he said, the insurgents' unwillingness to put up a fight may end up costing them the support of the people who are shielding them now. [In your dreams. And that has to be the stupidest comment of the month, so far. Well, it's another Lt. Col. babbling this silly bullshit, so what can one expect?]**

Lt. Gen. Thomas F. Metz, the commander of ground forces in Iraq, said he believed that the problem of tracking down fighting-age men here was "unique to this particular piece of the operation" and not true of Iraq as a whole. [God, it's a whole clown show, with one stand-up comic after another. And this is the commander of ground forces in Iraq? Sorry, that's too harsh. There must be all kinds of places in Iraq where the resistance fighters stand there in neat little lines waiting for Lt. Gen. Metz to show up.]

The enduring optimism of many American troops was summed up by Capt. Rob Krauer of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, who emphasized the need to train Iraqis to do the house-to-house operations in the long run. "We can win a war this way," he said. [This is not a satire. Repeat, this is not a satire. This really is a whole pack of the silliest people in command the modern world has seen.]

But the day-to-day frustrations were enunciated by Specialist Anthony Ellis, sweating in the belly of a Stryker as it slipped off the side of a tiny lane and lurched to a stop, its four right tires subsiding into an irrigation ditch. "Our man slips through the cracks again," he said, disappointment in his voice.

The raids are part of an operation involving about 2,500 marines and G.I.'s and a much smaller number of Iraqi soldiers, who are trying to take back what have become "no go" areas - places where the Iraqi government and the American-led forces exercise little control - before national elections in January.

The elusiveness of the insurgents became clear early Wednesday, when a raid netted hundreds of mortar and artillery rounds and rocket-propelled grenades but no people. Soldiers later searched other buildings in the desert area and found a number of women and children. Under questioning, the women said their husbands had all died.

Several officers said drone reconnaissance aircraft had spotted as many as six men in the area just minutes before troops arrived. **Colonel James, who said similar episodes had been replayed over and over, said the quick response by the presumed insurgents indicated that they had developed effective surveillance to monitor the Americans. [Give that man *top* command. He actually figured out the obvious.]**

Just after nightfall Wednesday, another raid raised questions about the effectiveness of American intelligence here. Acting on a tip that a group of farm houses was the site of mortar launchings directed at a nearby power plant, a swarm of marines, soldiers and armored vehicles stormed into the area.

An explosive charge was used to blow open the door of one building when no one answered a knock. The building turned out to be deserted. But in an adjacent structure, the soldiers found a frightened family of eight huddled in one room.

The head of the family, a middle-aged man who said his name was Abd Jassin Hamid, stood in front of the others, who squatted in a corner. But when asked by a reporter in broken Arabic whether there were mujahedeen in the area, Mr. Hamid's son, Adnan, stepped forward and said in English, "No, no, no, no, no."

As the armed American soldiers stood about waiting for an interpreter, Adnan and his father made digging motions, indicating in pantomime that they were only farmers.

In another building a woman and six children squatted outside the front door, watching in apparent shock as the Americans, wearing night-vision goggles, trooped into their house. There was one man inside. He identified himself as Mr. Jassin and nervously showed the Americans around his house. They found one automatic rifle and a magazine of ammunition, which are allowed for personal protection.

Still, Mr. Jassin plaintively offered to explain why he had the weapon. "Ali Baba fil Iraq!" he said, meaning that there were thieves in Iraq, hardly a controvertible assertion, and that he needed the gun for protection.

The Americans indicated that they had found no reason to suspect the farmers of insurgent activity, yet they returned in force the next day to check out some of the other buildings in the complex. The family filed out of yet another house as two well-kept calves grazed in a shady pen.

Again nothing was found, and because no interpreter was available, one of the soldiers, who had a shotgun dangling from a belt outfitted with shotgun shells along with his other weaponry, struggled to find a way to say they were leaving. "All I know is 'shukran,'" he said, turning to his buddies and using the Arabic word for thank you.

It was suggested that he could say, "Ma'a salama," the traditional words for goodbye.

"I can't learn all that stuff," the soldier said, walking away and using a strong expletive.

At 3 p.m. that day, Thursday, the soldiers were at an encampment near the strategic Jurf Kas Sukr Bridge across the Euphrates when two mortar shells exploded, one close enough to make an enormously loud blast. The Strykers set off in pursuit.

The chase began promisingly, with a pickup trucks sighted moving away from the area from which the mortar was thought to have been fired.

"We'll vaporize them," Specialist Ellis said confidently.

The first thing the soldiers were forced to do was to blast a parked, apparently empty, Toyota pickup truck on their route with heavy machine-gun fire on the chance that it contained a bomb. The vehicles sped past and continued the pursuit.

But on a narrow lane, the four right tires of one Stryker vehicle slipped into the irrigation ditch. Then a second Stryker in the convoy slipped in and was stuck as well.

As the sun set over the fields, the vehicles were still stuck, and a wrecker sent to get them out became briefly stuck as well. A second wrecker arrived.

At midnight, long after the local farmers had lost interest in the operation, the last Stryker was yanked out of the mud and the soldiers went back to their camp.

Iraq War Reports: Resistance Point Of View

Translated and/or compiled by Muhammad Abu Nasr, member editorial board The Free Arab Voice.

Thursday, 7 October 2004

Resistance shoots down US F-14 fighter bomber over western Iraq Thursday afternoon. Resistance forces shot down a US F-14 aircraft that was flying at low altitude over the city of **Rawah** in western Iraq at 4:45pm Thursday afternoon. **Because it passed over the city at low altitude, Resistance fighters were able to score a direct hit on it with a 14.5mm caliber four-barreled Dimitrov.**

Friday, 8 October 2004

Resistance blows up Bayji oil pipeline.

Fire broke out in an oil pipeline near Baghdad on Friday morning. The local correspondent of Mafkarat al-Islam reported that at exactly 11am, fire broke out on the Bayji oil pipeline. Flames were still coming from the pipeline at the time he filed his report posted at 6:20pm local time (5:20pm Mecca time).

TROOP NEWS

Rumsfeld Visits: Troops Ordered To Shut Up About Going Home

10 October 2004 By Robert Burns, The Associated Press

In a question-and-answer session with hundreds of Marines assembled in a concrete-line aircraft hangar at this desert air base in western Iraq, Rumsfeld was asked what the future holds for the length and frequency of troop deployments in the country.

Before Rumsfeld appeared at the main operating base of the 3rd Marine Air Wing, the approximately 1,500 Marines in his audience were give instructions by Sgt. Maj. Dennis Reed on what not to ask. "Don't ask when you're going home. We'll tell you when you're going home," Reed said. [One of these days, Sgt. Major, the troops will be telling you when they're going home. And that day will come sooner than you could possibly imagine. And when it comes, you'd best shut up, stand aside, and be very very polite.]

Accompanying Rumsfeld on the flight in a Black Hawk helicopter was Hazem Shaalan, Iraq's interim defense minister.

As a remind of the tenuous security situation in the Iraq capital, the fleet of Black Hawks carrying Rumsfeld and his entourage flew at high speed, just above rooftop level, occasionally zigzagging en route to the International Zone where the U.S. Embassy is located.

Rumsfeld also met with Ayad Allawi, the interim Iraqi prime minister, at the government's headquarters not far from the U.S. Embassy. The two sat side by side in large chairs; an Iraqi flag was behind them.

Allawi, referring twice to Rumsfeld as the secretary of state, thanked him for the United States' help in giving Iraqis their freedom.

2/3rds Of Public Say Withdraw From Iraq If Not Wanted There; 98% Of Iraqis Say Occupation Not Wanted There; Case Closed

September 29, 2004 by Jim Lobe, Antiwar.com

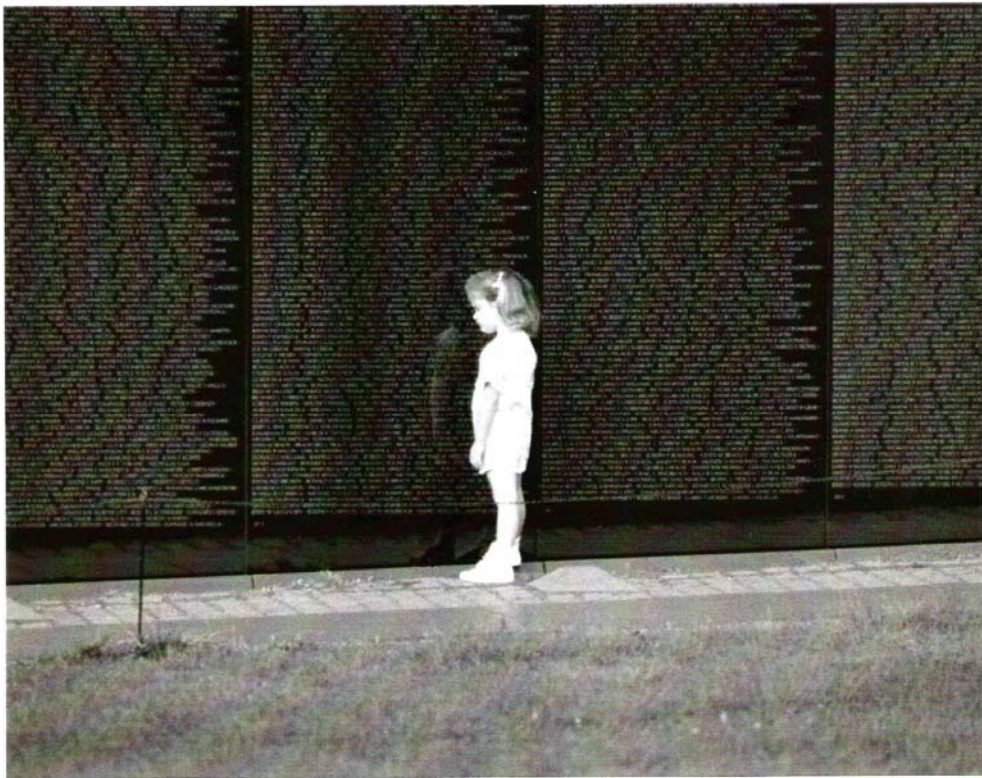
Three years of the Bush administration's "war on terrorism" appears to have reduced the appetite of the U.S. public and its leaders for unilateral military engagements, according to a major survey released Tuesday by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.

More than two-thirds of both the public and the leaders agreed the United States should withdraw from Iraq if a clear majority of Iraqi people want it to do so.

[How could it get any “clearer”? “According to the available polls, 98 percent of the Iraqis want the Americans to leave:” September 26, 2004 William Pfaff, Seattle Times]

As to whether Washington should remove its military presence from the Middle East if a majority of people there desire it, 59 percent of the public said yes, but only 35 percent of the elite agreed.

87 percent of the public and 85 percent of the elite said they would favor the terms of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty; 80 percent of both groups said they favored the landmine ban; 76 percent of the public and 70 percent of the elite said they support U.S. participation in the International Criminal Court; and 71 percent of both groups said they back U.S. participation in the Kyoto Protocol to reduce global warming.



*“The ‘Wall” 58,000 Average Age 19 — From the Senior Prom to Vietnam
Mike Hastie Army Medic Vietnam 1970-71*

Photo from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, U.S. Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71

(Pease contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) for more examples of his outstanding work. T)

“The Commanding Officers Are Out Of Control.”

Soldiers, Vets Support Lampin; Tell More Horror Stories Of Army Abuse

August 31, 2004 Military Advantage

As you can tell, the medical board, med hold are not run by anyone with enough sense to pour piss out of a boot.

Soldiers With Injuries Sent To Iraq

In response to Ed Offley's column ("One Soldier Hobbles through a Year of Hell," DefenseWatch, Aug. 20, 2004): Offley nailed it dead on. **I was the rear detachment sergeant major of 3rd ACR during their deployment to Iraq.**

We had a CSM who overrode several legitimate medical issues and sent soldiers into harm's way. We were barely able to stop him from sending one soldier who had an approved retirement date and had a medical condition in which doctors warned him that if he wore a helmet, his neck could break and he would likely be paralyzed.

One soldier was going through the alcohol abuse rehab and was yanked and sent to Iraq. As I understand it, he was drunk in a convoy and decided to urinate while moving, fell out, was run over and killed.

Another soldier was required to wear a leg brace in bed and was sent to Iraq being told that they would ship him the brace and that he could use it in the cot.

In other words, when Offley noted that this was an order of magnitude worse than the medical-hold disaster at Fort Stewart, he was exactly correct.

William Craig Hathaway

War Doesn't Need Hobbled Soldiers

Regarding Ed Offley's column ("One Soldier Hobbles through a Year of Hell," DefenseWatch, Aug. 20, 2004): I must say that the piece about disabled vets sent into the combat site disgusted me.

I have only spent five months downrange getting shot at - that was something. The location I was in was hotter then than Abu Ghraib. We got hit every other day. I can't imagine a disabled guy getting by in our circus. And if he were one of my troops, I would send him home.

Please do not publish my name, rank or otherwise. Keep up the good work. We GIs need you old guys to keep looking after us.

A Soldier in the Dirt

Retention Tied to Soldier Treatment

After reading Ed Offley's column ("One Soldier Hobbles through a Year of Hell," DefenseWatch, Aug. 20, 2004): Is there any wonder why there is a retention problem with the way soldiers are treated? **I was a 10-year regular Army vet and got out after the first Gulf War. It is sad to say that things have not changed.**

As the father of two little boys, my sons will not don a military uniform. If they are drafted, we will move to Canada. Who has their best interests at heart - the military? Ha. I know - I was in and lived it, I have served enough for both of them.

I feel sorry for soldiers. They are underpaid and under-appreciated. They are the beasts of burden. May God bless them and watch over them, because the Army sure won't.

Ron N.

Not An Isolated Incident

Regarding Ed Offley's column ("One Soldier Hobbles through a Year of Hell," DefenseWatch, Aug. 20, 2004):

As Sgt. Lampin's wife said, this is not an isolated incident. But soldiers are afraid to talk. Threats of court-martial and prison hang over their heads.

I'm hoping when (and if) my son is discharged that someone can hear his story.

He was brought back to the United States from Iraq for needed surgery (which was confirmed by three doctors in Iraq and one in the United States) then put on a flight back to Iraq three days later, with no surgery and with a threat of military prison if he didn't return to Iraq immediately. He had to wait 10 months to get the medical care he needed and all the time he was actively serving in Iraq.

The commanding officers are out of control.

Val Kosky

Medical Boards Without Common Sense

In reaction to Ed Offley's column ("One Soldier Hobbles through a Year of Hell," DefenseWatch, Aug. 20, 2004): **I am appalled that the Army would force a soldier with a very bad knee into combat knowing the severity of his condition.**

In 1991, I was forced out of the Army after almost nine years of flawless service for having a heat stroke on a damn road march. I was not alone. The ICU unit at Moncrief Army Hospital was packed to the gills with heat casualties. About a week later, someone had found a newspaper, which reported that the Army was admitting to having only one heat casualty and that the training had been halted for the excessive heat index.

I was forced out of the service as non-deployable. When I returned to civilian life, I worked six years in a foundry pouring 36,000-degree molten steel and not once did I have any recurring symptoms of any kind whatsoever.

As you can tell, the medical board, med hold are not run by anyone with enough sense to pour piss out of a boot.

The kick in the pants of it all is, I would have been spared all of the hell if I had some water so that I would not have dehydrated.

Michael T. Sister

Lampin Case Shows Absence of Leadership

Regarding Ed Offley's column ("One Soldier Hobbles through a Year of Hell," DefenseWatch, Aug. 20, 2004): **Having about Sgt. Lampin's experience, I find it so absurd that something like this could happen. It's absurd, but not at all surprising.**

As a member of the Army Reserve for 20 years, I've seen first-hand how horribly apathetic some commanders can be to a soldier's needs. Shame on the commander who overrode the profile, and shame on the new commander as well.

Why increase the risk of losing a soldier by sending him into combat "hobbling." You also decrease the effectiveness of the unit on a whole by not having a healthy combat ready soldier in his place. Will they ever get a clue?

Andrea Scott

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation, the cuts to veterans' benefits, or the dangers of depleted uranium - is the first reason Traveling Soldier is necessary. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our

goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Fallujah Sends A Message



October 10, 2004 Thanassis Cambanis, Boston Globe Staff

Friday in Fallujah, bulldozers moved the wreckage of a house hit in a predawn airstrike, which the United States said targeted a Zarqawi network meeting place.

Khalid Adai al-Dulaimi wept by the rubble of the building, which he identified as his brother's home. He said his nephew, Ahmed Maher al-Dulaimi, was killed while celebrating his wedding Thursday night.

"We will avenge our dead from the Americans," he said.

A local mujahideen leader known as Khalid abu Jihad stopped by the site and addressed the neighbors and relatives as they combed through the debris.

"You are idiots," he said. "We have told you that the American troops have no conscience. You wanted the negotiations, but they want to kill your women and children."

Support For Zarqawi Grows Among Iraqis Because Of U.S. Airstrikes

Oct. 05, 2004 By Hannah Allam, Knight Ridder Newspapers

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Once reviled as the man who brought beheadings to Iraq, Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi is gaining support among Iraqis who are outraged over the trail of razed neighborhoods and dead civilians left by the U.S. military's anti-insurgent offensives this month.

The trademark black banner of al-Zarqawi's Monotheism and Jihad group typically hangs in the background of grainy videos that show foreign hostages in Iraq meeting grisly deaths at the hands of terrorists.

These days, the ominous flag also pops up in a Baghdad neighborhood known for daily shootouts between Islamic militants and American forces.

"The banners are a reaction to what the Americans did and what they are still doing in Fallujah and Samarra, with bombings and killings," said Sheik Hassan al Niemi of the Muslim Scholars Association, a conservative Sunni Muslim group that opposes the American presence in Iraq.

"Why not have foreign fighters here? When the Americans came, they didn't come alone. They brought their allies. Why is it a crime against us if other Arabs stand with Iraqis? They're our brothers."

In a crowded Baghdad square known as the Thieves' Market for its array of stolen wares, vendors said they sold at least a hundred Monotheism and Jihad hostage videos every day. **Titles for sale this week included "Soldiers of God" and "Zarqawi Slaughters an American." Men of all ages snapped them up for the equivalent of 75 cents each.**

"At least 25 percent of my customers now support the beheadings because it's a way to take revenge against the Americans," said a 31-year-old vendor who gave his name only as Abu Ali.

While social scientists and government officials say most Iraqis still bristle against the extremist brand of Islam and the shocking murders committed by al-Zarqawi's ilk, his deeds have become more palatable if not outright supported by Iraqis who already opposed the U.S. military presence and the American-backed Iraqi government. **A stepped-up campaign of airstrikes against al-Zarqawi and other militants in the flashpoint cities of Fallujah and Samarra only pushed Iraqis closer to a man who was once persona non grata.**

"Because Zarqawi raised the banner of resistance, they support him," said Salman al-Jumaili, a Baghdad University professor and Fallujah native who tracks Sunni insurgent groups.

"They welcome anyone who is anti-American. The public trend is toward extremism because their houses and towns are under bombardment. They don't support Zarqawi himself, they support the resistance he represents."

Along Haifa Street in Baghdad, soot-stained buildings and shattered windows are lingering evidence of intense gun battles between insurgents and American troops. **Banners supporting al-Zarqawi appeared after the corridor's worst showdown, when 13 residents were killed and more than 50 wounded** as a U.S. helicopter fired on a crowd cheering at the scene of a burning American armored vehicle last month.

"When I come to work early in the morning, I see the banners lining the whole streets. Between each palm tree you can find one," said Tareq Younis, 23, a barber on Haifa Street. "When the Americans come, they rip them down. When the Humvees leave, we see no more banners."

None of the black flags were visible Tuesday, but one section of Haifa Street remained too dangerous for reporters to venture down. Graffiti scrawled across walls left no mystery as to local loyalties.

"We'll be happy to cut off your head, Iyad Allawi," read one message aimed at the interim prime minister. **"Long live the Arab fighters!"** read another.

<p style="text-align: center;">OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

Group Frees 10 Turks After Company Quits Iraq

October 10, 2004 Reuters

Iraqi kidnappers have released 10 Turkish hostages they had held for over a month.

"A statement sent to Al Jazeera said the release came after their Turkish company announced it would stop its activities and completely withdraw from Iraq," the Arab broadcaster said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Decline And Fall Of The U.S. Empire

October 3, 2004 By JAMES DAO, NYTimes.com

A Pentagon-appointed panel recently concluded that the military would lack the forces to handle its current combat and stabilization operations if new crises emerged. **"We have put ourselves in a position where we don't have the capability to handle another major contingency,"** said Senator Jack Reed, a Rhode Island Democrat and a West Point graduate.

[Comment:

[In World War II, Hitler became so obsessed with Stalingrad that he took away forces from the drive on Odessa and the Caspian oil fields, and from other parts of the Russian front. The Russians not only won at Stalingrad, they turned the war all along the line, and the beginning of the end had come for Hitlers' dreams of Empire. The German troops paid the price for that Imperial lunacy.

[Then a later generation of Russian soldiers paid the price of Russian politicians Imperial dreams in Afghanistan. It broke the Russian Empire and brought down the Stalinist ruling class and all their puppet regimes in Eastern Europe.

[U.S. troops are paying the price for today's Imperial lunacy, and neither Kerry nor Bush have the slightest intention of giving up the U.S. Empire. Whichever wins, it will require the application of serious corrective discipline to make him do so. Fortunately, our troops are loyal to ordinary Americans and their liberties, regardless of what their officers, or the ruling class of people who buy and sell the politicians think, say, or do. Therein is our best hope for the future. T.]

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Green Zone Turns Redder By The Day

Oct 10, 2004 By Luke Baker, BAGHDAD (Reuters)

It was supposed to be the safest patch of land in Iraq, but instead is slowly succumbing to the creeping dangers stalking the rest of the country.

Baghdad's Green Zone, home to thousands of U.S., British and other coalition officials, as well as the headquarters of the U.S. military and the interim Iraqi government, was set up as an impregnable fortress against the mayhem outside.

In the beginning, the "Green" stood for healthy, protected, ready-to-go. Everything outside was dubbed the "Red Zone" -- unhealthy, dangerous, best not to go.



Smoke bellows from U.S. headquarters at the 'Green Zone' after an explosion Oct 7, 2004. (AP Photo/Anja Niedringhaus)

Ringed by 12-foot-high concrete blast walls and defended by U.S. tanks and machineguns, off-duty U.S. soldiers and others on the inside could once happily jog along palm-lined avenues, past grandiose palaces, safe in their bubble.

Although insurgents occasionally lobbed mortars into the four-square-mile complex, once Saddam Hussein's presidential compound, on the west bank of the Tigris river, they did little damage and life was largely unaffected.

But over the past year, and especially in recent weeks, life in the Green Zone has grown steadily more precarious.

"It's definitely getting riskier," said one British official who lives and works in the zone but declined to be named.

"Sometimes it feels like you're living on a firing range, or on a really well-defended but dangerous housing estate."

In the last six months U.S. troops have carried out dozens of raids inside the Green Zone, targeting the estimated 10,000 Iraqis who live within its fortifications. Scores of arrests were made and some families moved out.

"You're supposed to be safe in here, but you're always looking over your shoulder. The Green Zone is huge, people can get in, it's not impossible to be kidnapped in here," said a British executive who works for the Iraqi government.

Last week, a bomb was defused outside one of the complex's more popular restaurants, a ramshackle joint called the Green Zone Cafe, frequented by scores of soldiers, contractors, embassy and security staff.

Crowds no longer gather at the Green Zone's other popular haunts -- two Chinese restaurants and a pizza parlor.

The threat partly stems from the thousands of Iraqi families who live in the area, some of whom, security experts say, are clearly bent on hitting at foreign interlopers if they can. The Iraqi government is considering moving all the families out.

But there is also a threat from the thousands of Iraqi translators and sub-contractors who enter the zone every day for work. Checks are carried out on all of them, but it is impossible to stop security badges being passed around.

Some residents of the Green Zone say it is only matter of time before someone is abducted or a bomb goes off.

"We're steadily looking like the rest of Iraq," said a British embassy official.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

It's Overwhelming: Democrats, Republicans United For More War

October 9, 2004 Reuters

WASHINGTON - The US House of Representatives on Saturday approved a final \$422 billion military appropriations bill.

The house passed the final bill 359-14, sending it to the Senate, which was expected to vote to send the legislation to Bush before Congress breaks next week to campaign for November 2 presidential and congressional elections.

Ho Ho Ho

Sept. 29, 2004 By Christopher Dickey, Newsweek

A common joke around Washington has it that if you ask the president about the weather, he'll tell you "freedom is winning." More seriously, on the day the second of two American hostages were beheaded in Iraq last week, he stood beside Ayad Allawi, the U.S.-appointed ruler of the country and said, "We're sickened by the atrocities. But we'll never be intimidated. And freedom is winning."

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

12 Occupation Cops Killed

October 9, 2004 Associated Press

Rebels opened fire on four pickup trucks carrying ballot boxes from Chura to Tirin Kot, as it passed through a mountainous area at about 5 p.m., police said.

Three policemen were killed and four others wounded, but the convoy was able to continue to Tirin Kot, where the US military or the UN are expected to collect the votes by helicopter for counting in Kandahar.

In neighbouring Kandahar province, eight more police died when their vehicle hit a mine, another mine killed an Afghan soldier, and security forces arrested two men carrying a hand grenade.

Your Blood For Their Oil

Both [U.S. Ambassador] Khalizad and [Afghan "President"] Karzai happen to be former consultants to oil giant Unocal, which, backed by the Bush administration, negotiated with the Taliban for an oil pipeline to run through Afghanistan. It was when those talks broke down, **long before September 11**, that Bush set his sights on regime change in Afghanistan. 11 October 2004, Marjorie Cohn, *t r u t h o u t* Perspective

Received:

**JOIN THE MILLION WORKER MARCH;
BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**

October 09, 2004

THE SAME DEMOCRATS THAT BROUGHT YOU THE BARBEDWIRE PEN AT THE "DEMOCRATIC" CONVENTION AND PREVENTED PRO- PEACE DELEGATES FROM EVEN BEING SEEING THERE HAVE PLANNED AN EVENT TO COMPETE WITH THE MILLION WORKER MARCH ON SUNDAY OCTOBER 17, 2004.

The same people who want to bring "democracy" to Iraq have chosen a candidate who is determined to win the war no matter how many lives are lost and how long it takes.

These same people have, in spite of a democratic vote at the Veterans For Peace convention supporting the Million Worker March , decided to hold an event in support of the other WAR candidate, John Kerry on the same day.

PLEASE REJECT THE EFFORTS BY VETERANS FOR KERRY TO INTERFERE WITH THE EFFORTS OF VETERANS FOR PEACE TO ACHIEVE ITS GOALS IN SEEKING WORLD PEACE.

SUPPORT THE: "really democratic" MILLION WORKER MARCH.

LOOK UP THE 22 DEMANDS ON WWW.MILLIONWORKERMARCH.ORG
END TO WAR, HEALTH CARE, SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS, END TO RACISM ETC.

THE RECENT DEBATES WERE DEVOID OF ANY REAL EFFORTS IN THESE AREAS.

IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO CONTACT ME TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS OR TO MEET IN D.C. AND MARCH AS A VETERAN CONTINGENT.

For the Anti-War Movement: The Elections are Really on October 17 in Washington, DC

If You Want to Vote to "Bring the Troops Home Now!" You Have to Get on the Bus to the Million Worker March!

For further info about the march you may contact me at:

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